

**SUMMARY OF THE  
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
FEBRUARY 21, 2001**

The Accrediting Authority Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on Wednesday, February 21, 2001 at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time (EST) by teleconference. The meeting was led by its chair, Mr. Louis Johnson of the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality. A list of action items is given in Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. *The purpose of the meeting was to continue progress on previously distributed agenda items.*

**INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Johnson began the meeting by welcoming those in attendance to the teleconference. He then asked for comments/edits to the minutes from the last teleconference which was on February 7, 2001. All committee members present agreed that the minutes could stand as written and should be forwarded for posting on the NELAC Website.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**Conflict Resolution Clearinghouse**

Mr. Johnson had forwarded a draft proposal outlining the structure and chain of command recommended for a conflict resolution procedure for NELAC accredited laboratories and accrediting authorities. The committee discussed this proposal at length with Ms. Roxanne Robinson suggesting an appeals process be added to the original structure. The proposal became shorter but more concise throughout the discussion. An appeals process overseen by the NELAC Board of Directors was developed and added to the proposed wording during the meeting. The proposed process of conflict resolution would operate as described in the following paragraph:

The affected parties in a uniformity issue over a NELAC Standards interpretation conflict will first contact the state accrediting authorities concerned. If the state accrediting authorities are unable to resolve the Standards interpretation question then the NELAC Director is contacted with the details. The NELAC Director then forwards the details of the conflict/question to the appropriate NELAC Committee for their interpretation. The conflict between the affected parties is either resolved by the decision of the appropriate NELAC standing committee or an appeal is forwarded onto the NELAC Board of Directors for their decision. The resolution is forwarded onto the affected parties and also posted on the NELAC Website by the NELAC Director and the NELAC Webmaster for the edification of all concerned parties.

The necessary binding language will be added to Chapter 6 of the NELAC Standard to make decisions issued by the NELAC Board of Directors final. All committee members present agreed on all final changes to the original proposal. Mr. Johnson will redraft the proposal incorporating all consensus changes and forward those to the committee members for comments and

suggestions. The proposed language will be finalized before the March 19, 2001 deadline for the submission of changes to the NELAC Standard.

### **Proposed Changes to Chapter Six of the NELAC Standard for Uniformity**

The committee discussed wording changes to the existing NELAC Standard to reflect uniform terminology throughout the Standard. The committee agreed on several changes concerning Sections 6.2.3 parts A and C. These changes will be incorporated into a redline/strikeout version of Chapter Six of the NELAC Standard for submission before the March 19, 2001 deadline.

### **Proposed Conflict Resolution Process for Current Accrediting Authorities and NELAP Assessors**

The committee discussed the draft proposal developed for the resolution of conflicts concerning interpretations of the NELAC Standard between NELAP Assessors and state accrediting authorities. The committee discussed and agreed on minor changes to the proposal. Mr. Johnson will finalize the edits and modifications and forward the revision to all committee members for discussion at the next scheduled teleconference.

### **QMP Document for NELAP**

Mr. Johnson requested an update on the development of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) documents for the NELAP accreditation process. Dr. Jeff Flowers requested assistance from both Ms. Robinson and Mr. Steve Arms in order to get a draft document before the committee by the next scheduled teleconference.

### **Draft Questionnaire**

Discussion on the draft questionnaire for the evaluation of consistency in NELAC on-site assessments was tabled until the next scheduled teleconference. The committee plans to distribute and discuss a draft questionnaire at the upcoming Seventh NELAC Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, UT in May 2001.

### **FUTURE TELECONFERENCES**

Mr. Johnson reminded those present at the meeting of the next two Accrediting Authority teleconferences which are scheduled for March 14, 2001 and March 28, 2001 at 2:00 p.m. EST.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mr. Johnson summarized the progress from the meeting, reminding all members of their tasks and impending deadlines. He then called for any further discussion of old business or any new topics for the committees' consideration. No further discussion was initiated so Mr. Johnson adjourned the meeting after thanking those in attendance.

**ACTION ITEMS  
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
FEBRUARY 21, 2001**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Date to be Completed</b>
1.	Mr. Johnson will forward all of the proposed language changes to Chapter 6 for the formation of a conflict resolution clearinghouse and for uniformity to the committee for finalization at the next teleconference.	3/14/01
2.	Dr. Flowers, Ms. Roxanne Robinson and Mr. Steve Arms will begin preparing a draft QMP document to the committee for discussion at the next teleconference.	3/14/01
3.	Mr. Johnson and Mr. Hoatson will finalize the existing draft for a NELAC On-site Assessment Questionnaire for discussion at the next scheduled teleconference.	3/14/01
4.	Mr. Johnson and Mr. Hoatson will finalize the existing draft of the Accrediting Authority Questionnaire for discussion at the next scheduled teleconference.	3/14/01

**PARTICIPANTS  
ACCREDITING AUTHORITY COMMITTEE MEETING  
FEBRUARY 21, 2001**

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